

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
19-20 June 1971

CIA was right after all

Among the many items of useful information in the now-banned secret Army report on Vietnam, this fact emerges: The intelligence services were a great deal more right than the little clique around President Johnson who weighed — and disregarded — their information. The fact should be duly recorded in all fairness, since intelligence — Army, Navy and CIA — has been criticized long and often for real or presumed bloopers in Vietnam.

There was, for example, the period in early 1964 when the administration became convinced that the Viet Cong was the creature of the Hanoi government. Its conclusion was that by bombing North Vietnam, it could stop the guerrillas in the South.

Intelligence countered that the Viet Cong was basically an indigenous movement and could not be strongly affected by punishing North Vietnam. President Johnson and most of his key advisers rejected the intelligence advice, and proceeded with plans to "undermine" the Viet Cong by bombing North Vietnam.

The CIA was also early in rejecting the domino theory, contending that the fall of South Vietnam would not lead to the fall of other nations in the area (with the possible exception of Cambodia) and an inexorable spread of communism. Again, the President and his advisers disregarded the intelligence estimates and clung to the theory that they were fighting a war to prevent the Chinese takeover of the whole subcontinent.

"The American intelligence community," says the report, "repeatedly provided the policymakers with what proved to be accurate warnings that desired goals were either unattainable or likely to provoke costly reactions from the enemy," but the policymakers went on serenely overruling the CIA and other intelligence services.

Objective analysis is the business of intelligence, and it must have been disillusioning to the professionals to find their best efforts constantly spurned by the highly placed amateurs in the White House. The report should drive home the lesson that wishful thinking is a poor foundation on which to build national policy.

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Letters on War Documents

To the Editor:

For many years I have been a faithful reader of The Times. I appreciated your paper's role as the "newspaper of record," printing "all the news that's fit to print."

However, in the last few years I have been dismayed by the appearance of yellow-tinged journalism in your good gray pages: editorializing and slanting of news have been evident in your news stories; frivolous feature stories have appeared on page one; Tom Wicker seems to have become a hippie; a gossip column graces your pages; and the generally "hip" liberal attitudes that characterized the last days of The New York Herald-Tribune seem to have been adopted as your editorial policy.

Despite these disheartening signs I remained a daily Times buyer and reader—but no longer. Your publication of an admittedly "secret" Government report seems to me utterly unethical, if not treasonable.

When the American people elect a Government, it is given the responsibility for conduct of foreign affairs and national security matters. By what mandate does The Times act? Who has given your paper the right to put our national security in possible jeopardy? Who elected you? (Or is the press above democratic institutions?) Your circulation may rise for a while as a result of such irresponsible journalism, but your moral position is permanently damaged. I will no longer spend fifteen cents a day for a publication I cannot respect; but I mourn the passing of the great tradition of the Good Gray Times.

J. P. DAVIS

Teaneck, N. J., June 14, 1971

To the Editor:

When I was a boy in California, my father was then President of the California Bankers Association and in this capacity he stumped the state for McKinley in the McKinley-Bryan election. Returning from his speaking engagements, he used to tell me that there was one thing he wanted me never to forget—if an issue was fairly presented to the American people, they could be counted on to reach a sound conclusion. This, after all, was fundamental to the democratic process as he understood it.

I grew up in this belief until in recent years I found that issues were no longer fairly presented. In fact, they were often misrepresented, and under these circumstances a fundamental aspect of the democratic process as we knew it was in danger of being undermined.

The recent publication of the Times of excerpts from the Pentagon-Vietnam

study affords striking evidence of the extent to which this process has proceeded. I can only hope that this disclosure will serve to awaken the American public to the threat to our democratic process which is involved in the substitution by Government of deceit for the frank presentation to the electorate of the issues with which it is confronted.

Only an aroused public opinion, to which The Times has made a notable contribution, can insure a return to the integrity of the democratic process in which we have been brought up to believe.

FRANK ALTSCHUL

New York, June 16, 1971

To the Editor:

The intended balance of power between branches of our Government can be badly upset, perhaps fatally, by an imbalance of information. For one branch can enforce its prejudices and will on another by withholding facts and distorting events, the knowledge of which it is privy to.

I refer of course to the war in Vietnam and to the specific facts and intelligence estimates withheld by the Executive from the Congress and the public. Two outstanding examples are the Tonkin Gulf incident and the C.I.A. report that the Vietcong was largely indigenous. If these items had been presented honestly, it is doubtful that the Executive would have rallied the support it did for our warlike actions.

Another related point—the majority of people in any nation, be it Germany, Russia or the U.S. or Vietnam, will believe what its government tells it about dangers from outside and will dutifully kill the men, women and children of "the enemy" in the name of patriotism. Thus the government plays the dual role of creator of an attitude and user of the attitude.

When the public attitude is based on lies and distortions, its use as a justification for actions or policy is contrary to the basic principles of our form of society, and dangerous. Where I find fault with the "silent majority" approach of our present Administration is in its use, with the knowledge that the majority has been deceived.

The Times is to be congratulated for its true patriotism and conformance with our ideals in bringing the facts of our Vietnam interference to light. You are correctly carrying out the role of a free press in our system, and there is no substitute for this necessary function.

MILLARD M. BRENNER

Philadelphia, June 16, 1971

To the Editor:

It is hardly a source of satisfaction, but it should serve as a lesson, that everything the radical left has said about the Vietnam war finds support

in the Pentagon study published by The Times. In fact, as in so many other aspects of American politics (government surveillance, for example) things turn out to be substantially worse than the left imagined.

In this case, the Vietnam escalation was planned even earlier than the summer of 1964, and the "preparation" of public opinion was even more consummate, the reliance on military force to destroy an admittedly popular, mass-based peasant movement even more cynical, and the torpedoing of possibilities for a negotiated settlement even more deliberate than the dissenting writers on Vietnam assumed.

I wonder what impact all of this will have on "objective" social scientists who dismiss leftist critiques of American society as "paranoid" and excessively oriented toward "conspiracy" theories.

RICHARD B. DU BOFF
Associate Professor of Economics
Bryn Mawr College

Bryn Mawr, Pa., June 14, 1971

To the Editor:

It is with great sadness that I have been reading your paper while back here for a brief visit.

I find your slanting of the news in The Herald Tribune in Europe difficult to read, but your recent articles in The Times on Vietnam are not only irresponsible, but detrimental to our country, in my opinion.

When we move back to Greenwich I can assure you The Times will no longer be our newspaper.

DOROTHY B. MOORE
Greenwich, Conn., June 15, 1971

To the Editor:

Perhaps if the television networks would have done what you are now doing, in regard to your carrying the story of the Vietnam war and what went on behind the scenes, the Bill of Rights, especially the First Amendment, would be alive and well and undisputed in the United States.

The Times is pursuing its usual course in publishing, in full, important documents and speeches. This is surely the most important story you have

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The Nation

Pentagon Papers:

A Great Test— 'This, Too, Vietnam Wrought'

The Pentagon's own best account of how the United States tricked itself into a war it could not win began to appear serially in The New York Times last week . . .

... until The Times was ordered to stop, at least temporarily, to let the Government prove that further publication would cause "irreparable" injury to the national defense and ought to be enjoined by court order, presumably forever.

Thus came into being the case of the United States of America v. The New York Times Company.

For the first time, as far as anyone could tell, an American newspaper of general circulation was restrained by prior court order from publishing articles and documents whose content could only be surmised by the Government and whose damaging properties therefore could only be assumed. For The Times refused to let either judge or general, or even President, inspect or edit the articles before they appeared in print. And it vowed to fight to the Supreme Court, if necessary, to beat back the Government's attempt at "censorship."

The case posed the purest possible conflict between individual freedom and national security.

• Legally, it was a contest between the First Amendment freedoms of speech and press against the Government's right to protect itself by court injunction.

• Symbolically, it was typical of the conflicts of the Vietnam era, between the rule of law and the necessity for order, between the demand for justice at home and the require-

ments of physical security abroad, between the rights of the citizen and the rights of society.

• Politically, it was the climax of two years of tension between the Nixon Administration and the dominant instruments of communication. The use of the espionage laws to inhibit and harass The New York Times—and then The Washington Post, as well—was interpreted by some as the ultimate expression of President Nixon's persistent resentment of those newspapers and Vice President Agnew's roundhouse denunciations of them.

But it was not Republican interests that Attorney General John N. Mitchell had to defend, except in the broadest sense that more Republicans than Democrats are on the conservative side of the current social conflict in America.

The articles published in The Times in the first three installments about the Pentagon papers have already been universally interpreted as the severest possible indictment of the Johnson Administration and the officials brought to eminence and power by John F. Kennedy's Eastern intellectual establishment—so much so that a common first reaction of many readers was to suspect a deliberate leak of Government secrets and documents by the Nixon Administration.

"Tomorrow: the Kennedy Administration increases the stakes," said The Times before it was forced to suspend the Vietnam series last Tuesday.

The Times refused to divulge the sources of its materials. It refused to state how it came by them, through the "investigative reporting" of Neil Sheehan, a reporter in the Washington bureau. It refused, despite the persistent pleas of the Court and the Federal Government to give any more than the sketchiest descriptions of the documents in its possession. And it refused to surrender the materials. To yield on any of these points, it argued, would risk betrayal of its sources and the loss of confidence by all other potential sources of information—inside as well as outside government. This right to stand mute had already been tried in past years, and resulted in court vic-

tories awaiting Supreme Court review.

The issue now was the freedom of the press itself—the right to speak out, regardless of consequence, under the First Amendment of the Constitution. That extraordinary and unique doctrine of liberty has already been interpreted by the Supreme Court to protect even the publication of lies about public figures and, more recently, private citizens in public roles, provided only that the accuser could not demonstrate the presence of an overwhelming malice.

To the persistent question in court last week—who elected The Times to define the national security or to determine which secrets could be published?—the paper's answer was, simply, the Constitution. It acknowledged, but only philosophically and hypothetically, that there could develop a risk of injury or national peril so great as to justify an effort by the courts or Congress to enjoin publication of certain information before the fact. But it conceded no such risk or justification at this time.

This odd chapter in the saga of American journalism began in the summer of 1967—at the height of battle in Vietnam and the height of frustration with that battle in the Pentagon. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, privately disillusioned and guilt-ridden about the war, but still publicly stalwart, was persuaded to commission a massive history of decision-making about Indochina. He said he wanted to leave a record of what went wrong, although he knew it would also be a record of how many other governments and officials had been wrong before his time.

Leslie Gelb, on Mr. McNamara's staff, assembled a scholarly team of 30 to 40 civilian and military officials, inside and outside government, all of them familiar with some aspect of the Vietnam history. They were given access to all the files of the Pentagon and many documents of the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and other offices, but not to the personal papers of the Presidents.

Within a year, they produced a history, which the Government authority describes as a thorough, scholarly, monumental and

cold-blooded study of the decision-making process—by no means complete or definitive, but based upon the textual authority of more secret government papers, minutes, cables and even first-draft proposals than usually appear in public even long after the events they describe.

It is a chilling record of diplomatic and military duplicity by four American Administrations, even to those who deem the cause more just than that of the Communist adversaries. The Pentagon study of 47 volumes states in its analyses and demonstrates in its texts that the American commitments to cold and hot war overrode at every stage every conventional consideration of domestic and international law, of the rights of Congress, the requirements of the Constitution, the sensibilities of allies, the fate of individual personalities, the rights of American citizens, and the most elementary standards of truth.

There can be no doubt that the publication of such a record, as much as the misery of the war itself, will temporarily embarrass the United States Government in the eyes of the world and its own citizens, and it may damage the professional reputations of some of the principal actors.

The tonic value of such an orgy of truth-telling remains to be seen. All other issues aside, the publication of this record will finally test the real benefit of the truth-that-hurts—as well as the maturity of a democratic people and the philosophical underpinning of the First Amendment, both of which will be simultaneously tested in the courts.

For most of this massive history, including much of its documentation, came into the possession of The Times, then other newspapers, individuals and members of Congress. It will come out.

After months of painstaking research, analysis and preparation, and weeks of internal debate about the proper method of presentation, The Times began last Sunday to give its readers a more orderly, though also more concise, rendering of the history than the study itself, along with

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LBJ Shown as Crafty, but No Liar

By Bernard D. Nossiter
Washington Post Staff Writer

A comparison of the Johnson administration's public remarks with the material that has been published from the Pentagon's private study of the Vietnam war discloses a public record marked by half-truths, careful ambiguities, and misleading and deceptive statements rather than flatfooted untruths.

What appears at first glance to be the grossest misstatement in public frequently turns out, on close examination, to contain a phrase or word that saves it from the label "lie."

For example, on April 1, 1965, according to the published documents, President Johnson secretly made a fateful decision, ordering the 3,500 Marines in Vietnam to shift from a static defense of the base at Danang to offensive actions. This was the beginning of an offensive combat role for U.S. ground troops.

The first public hint of this change came on June 8 when a State Department spokesman said that "American forces would be available for combat support." The next day, the White House put out a statement asserting:

"There has been no change in the mission of United States ground combat units in Vietnam in recent days or weeks. The President has issued no order of any kind in this regard to Gen. Westmoreland recently or at any other time."

This appears to be the lie direct. But the statement continued:

"The primary mission of these troops is to secure and safeguard important military installations like the airbase at Danang. They have the associated mission of actively patrolling and securing action in and near the areas thus safeguarded."

"If help is requested by appropriate Vietnamese commanders, Gen. Westmoreland also has authority within the assigned mission to employ these troops in support of Vietnamese

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forces faced with aggressive attack . . ."

Thus, the last two paragraphs, although still avoiding the full truth, soften the impact of the first and patently false paragraph.

Again in late November 1964 the Administration's top-most circle, according to published material, agreed to adopt a "determined action program" aimed at putting pressure on Hanoi and raising South Vietnamese morale. A draft position paper of Nov. 29 charts a two-phase bombing program as a key element in this plan—possible reprisal strikes against North Vietnam and a U.S. readiness to conduct sustained bombing against the North.

At a press conference on Nov. 28, a prescient reporter asked the President:

"Is expansion of the Vietnam war into Laos or North Vietnam a live possibility at this point?"

Mr. Johnson, in a lengthy reply, allowed that his top advisers were then meeting, but in the operative part of his response said:

"I anticipate that there will be no dramatic announcement (emphasis added) to come out of these meetings except in the form of your speculation."

This was literally true but substantively misleading. No dramatic announcement was made but the meetings all but sealed the dramatic decision to launch the two-phase bombing program that began in February.

Administration leaders rarely made outright misstatements about the crucial events in the 20 months up to July 1965 when, as the already published Pentagon documents say, the United States entered into an open-ended commitment and an Asian land war.

Perhaps Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara came as close as any to complete falsification in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

in February, 1968.

The Committee was exploring the origins of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, the authority on which the Johnson regime relied to enlarge the war. Sen. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), the chairman, was attempting to discover whether the administration had decided well in advance of the August incidents in the Tonkin Gulf to ask Congress for a broad grant of authority. The dialogue went like this:

The Chairman: Mr. Secretary did you see the contingency draft of what became the Southeast Asia resolution before it was ready?

Secretary McNamara: Mr. Chairman, I read in the newspaper a few weeks ago there had been such a contingency draft. I don't believe I ever saw it . . . But I can't testify absolutely that I didn't. My memory is not clear on that.

Executive Committee

In fact, the Executive Committee of the National Security Council — which included McNamara — had decided after its meetings on May 24 and 25, 1964 to seek a Congressional resolution authorizing "all measures" to assist South Vietnam. Thus, McNamara and the others had approved a draft of the Tonkin Gulf resolution nearly ten weeks before the attack on the American destroyers in those waters.

Even here, McNamara's choice of words to the Senate Committee is artful. He says he didn't believe he saw the draft and it is conceivable that he approved the substance without reading all the language. Moreover, he tells the committee that his memory isn't clear on the crucial point and he won't "absolutely" deny having seen it.

At the same hearing, Gen. Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, skirted perilously close to untruth. Whether he avoided it is an exercise in high-level semantics.

Chairman Fulbright asked Wheeler whether in the period around July 1964 the military had recommended extending the war to the north by bombing or other means.

Gen. Wheeler replied:

"I don't believe so, Mr. Chairman. I think that the proper answer would be that there were certain intelligence activities (deleted) but to the best of my knowledge and belief during that period there was no thought of extending the war into the North in the sense of our participation in such actions, activities."

Then, for the record, the Pentagon supplied an insertion:

"We have identified no such recommendation. A check of the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is continuing."

In fact, published records show, as early as Jan. 22, 1964 — six months before the period about which Fulbright was inquiring — the top brass sent McNamara a lengthy memo saying:

"Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the United States must make ready to conduct increasingly bolder actions in Southeast Asia to:

" . . . h. Conduct aerial bombing of key North Vietnam targets, using U.S. resources under Vietnamese cover, and with the Vietnamese openly assuming responsibility for the actions."

"j. Commit U.S. forces as necessary in direct actions against North Vietnam . . ."

Wheeler was stretching the truth to say the Chiefs harbored "no thought" of extending the war North. On the other hand, he could argue that a proposal "to make ready" northward actions is less than a recommendation and that he equates "thought" with an unqualified proposal.

The gap between public oratory and private belief is strikingly illustrated by Mr. Johnson's State of the Union address on Jan. 13, 1968.

STATINTL

Vietnam: Nobody Wrote the Last Act

By Leslie H. Gelb

A former Pentagon official, Gelb is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, writing a history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1940 to 1965. He was director of the Pentagon analytical compilation of documents on Vietnam which were the basis for recent articles in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The article below is excerpted with permission from *Foreign Policy* quarterly. Gelb's conclusions are based on two years of independent research since leaving government service. They are documented in the historical section of his *Foreign Policy* article which we are not reprinting.

THE STORY OF U.S. policy toward Vietnam is either far better or far worse than generally supposed. Our Presidents and most of those who influenced their decisions did not stumble step by step into Vietnam, unaware of the quagmire. U.S. involvement did not stem from a failure to foresee consequences.

Vietnam was indeed a quagmire, but most of our leaders knew it. Of course there were optimists and periods where many were genuinely optimistic. But those periods were infrequent and short-lived and were invariably followed by periods of deep pessimism.

Very few, to be sure, envisioned what the Vietnam situation would be like by 1968. Most realized, however, that "the light at the end of the tunnel" was very far away—if not finally unreachable. Nevertheless, our Presidents persevered. Given international compulsions to "keep our word" and "save face," domestic prohibitions against "losing," and their personal stakes, our leaders did "what was necessary," did it about the way they wanted, were prepared to pay the costs, and plowed on with a mixture of hope and doom. They "saw" no acceptable alternative.

Three propositions suggest why the United States became involved in Vietnam, why the process was gradual, and what the real expectations of our leaders were:

First, U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not mainly or mostly a story of step by step, inadvertent escalation and unforeseen quicksand. It is primarily a story

of why U.S. leaders considered that it was vital not to lose Vietnam by force to communism. Our leaders believed Vietnam to be vital not for itself, but for what they thought its "loss" would mean internationally and domestically. Previous involvement made further involvement more unavoidable, and, to this extent, commitments were inherited. But judgments of Vietnam's "vitalness"—beginning with the Korean War—were sufficient in themselves to set the course for escalation.

Second, our Presidents were never actually seeking a military victory in Vietnam. They were doing only what they thought was minimally necessary at each stage to keep Indochina, and later South Vietnam, out of Communist hands. This forced our Presidents to be brakemen, to do less than those who were urging military victory and to reject proposals for disengagement. It also meant that our Presidents wanted a negotiated settlement without fully realizing (though realizing more than their critics) that a civil war cannot be ended by political compromise.

Third, our Presidents and most of their lieutenants were not deluded by optimistic reports of progress and did not proceed on the basis of wishful thinking about winning a military victory in South Vietnam. They recognized that the steps they were taking were not adequate to win the war and that unless Hanoi relented, they would have to do more and more. Their strategy was to persevere in the hope that their will to continue—if not the practical effects of their actions—would cause the Communists to relent.

Each of these propositions is explored below.

I. "We Can't Afford to Lose"

THOSE WHO LED the United States into Vietnam did so with their eyes open, knowing why, and believing they had the will to succeed. The deepening involvement was not inadvertent, but mainly deductive. It flowed with sureness from the perceived stakes and attendant high objectives.

U.S. policy displayed remarkable continuity. There were not dozens of policy turning points. Each postwar President inherited previous commit-

ments. Each extended these commitments. Each administration from 1947 to 1969 believed that it was necessary to prevent the loss of Vietnam and, after 1954, South Vietnam by force to the Communists.

The reasons for this varied from person to person, from bureaucracy to bureaucracy, over time and in emphasis. For the most part, however, they had little to do with Vietnam itself. A few men argued that Vietnam had intrinsic strategic military and economic importance, but this view never prevailed. The reasons rested on broader international, domestic, and bureaucratic considerations.

Our leaders gave the international repercussions of "losing" as their dominant explicit reason for Vietnam's importance. During the Truman administration, Indochina's importance was measured in terms of French-American relations and Washington's desire to rebuild France into the centerpiece of future European security. After the cold war heated up and after the fall of China, a French defeat in Indochina was also seen as a defeat for the policy of containment. In the Eisenhower years, Indochina became a "testing ground" between the Free World and Communism and the basis for the famous "domino theory" by which the fall of Indochina would lead to the deterioration of American security around the globe.

President Kennedy publicly reaffirmed the falling domino concept. His primary concern, however, was for his "reputation for action" after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the Vienna meeting with Khrushchev, and the Laos crisis, and in meeting the challenge of "wars of national liberation" by counter-insurgency warfare. Under President Johnson, the code-word rationales became Munich, credibility, commitments and the U.S. word, a watershed test of wills with communism, raising the costs of aggression, and the principle that armed aggression shall not be allowed to succeed. There is every reason to assume that our leaders actually believed what they said, given both the

Political Impact

By JAMES DOYLE
 Star Staff Writer

Leading Democrats find themselves once again sifting the political wreckage of the Vietnam war. Most agree that the party has been hurt by the massive disclosure of secret Pentagon papers on the escalation of the war.

The leading candidates for the party's presidential nomination have moved, almost in unison, to separate themselves further from former President Lyndon B. Johnson, who presided over much of the history that is being revealed.

Democrats to Lose More

And, perhaps in an attempt to salvage a side issue, they have criticized the Nixon administration's attempts in court to block further disclosures.

It was the unanimous view of candidates and top advisers interviewed by The Star that President Nixon stands to gain little or nothing from the Vietnam revelations, but that the Democrats probably will lose more because the focus has shifted again to the alleged deceptions and recriminations of the Johnson administration.

Sen. Harold Hughes of Iowa referred in an interview to the new indications that Vietnam escalations were planned as far back as the summer of 1964.

"If the president was aware of it during the '64 campaign, it is one of the greatest acts of hypocrisy and deception in history," Hughes said.

Can't Blame Party

He added, "I really don't think anyone can blame the party for the planning of the Pentagon or the actions of a president.

"Bad decisions are not a matter of political philosophy. They are the result of bad advice, and bad advisers."

Frank Mankiewicz, the former press secretary to the late Robert Kennedy who now advises the campaign of Sen. George S. McGovern, D-S.D., said, "There are only two gainers in this thing—McGovern and the Central Intelligence Agency.

He was referring to McGovern's

long-standing disagreement with the war, dating back to 1963, and the revelations that the CIA was the most accurate in its analyses and predictions throughout the period of escalation.

Gary Hart, another McGovern campaign aide, said, "McGovern benefits only in a tangential way but not in any real sense.

"He's the guy who said we shouldn't have done it. Now he can say I told you so, but he won't.

"The entity which suffers is government, not party. It's not Nixon or Humphrey who loses the most, but the presidency.

"The more apocalyptic among us think it will be a generation after you and I are gone before the people will believe the president again."

Hart added, "If President Nixon went on television and said 'This photograph shows the holes for missiles in Cuba and I'm going to act,' the people at their television sets would say, 'No, Mr. President.'

"That's what's happened in eight years. People have always disbelieved politicians, until John Kennedy made them believable. That's all gone now, and Kennedy will probably be tarred with the rest."

Kennedy Cites Brother

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who was one of the first to call for disclosure of the rest of the story produced figures from the Congressional Record showing that 120 Americans died in Vietnam while his brother was in office. He noted that now the figure is well over 50,000.

And his office produced an excerpt from a JFK news conference on October 31, 1963, less than a month before his death. The President told reporters, "We would expect to withdraw a thousand men from South Vietnam before the end of the year . . . if we are able to do that, that would be our schedule."

Hubert Humphrey told reporters he had not been informed of the plans and actions described in the New York Times disclosures.

A former aide told of how he was shut out of the Johnson administration's councils once

he wrote a memo stating reservations about escalating the war.

At the end of a lengthy interview, Humphrey was asked how the revelations might affect his future ambitions. "I'm not sure I want any extra politics," he replied. "I've got a good job here (in the Senate)."

The Infighting

The potential candidates are indulging in recriminations among themselves.

A Kennedy aide pointed to the stories about Humphrey's stated lack of involvement: "Apparently Hubert was not vice president, as far as we can tell."

A McGovern aide was reminded that Edward Kennedy long ago disowned the war, and that he was never a member of his brother's administration.

"He dined well off the war and now he doesn't want to pick up the check," the McGovern man replied.

A Muskie aide said, "It doesn't help any of us. The question is who gets hurt most. The calls I make around the country aren't to neutrals,

but they indicate Humphrey gets hurt, and very badly."

Another McGovern partisan with roots in the Robert Kennedy campaigns: "Hubert is the only one who comes off as both a fool and a knave."

Nixon's Reaction

This kind of internal feuding apparently was being predicted as the major effect of the revelations at the White House early last week.

One of Nixon's political advisers told an acquaintance Thursday night, "We thought we would sit back and watch the Democrats be destroyed."

But, according to this source, by Monday night the White House began to realize that the ultimate discredit might spread to the present government.

"They learned the truth of what they have been saying for two years," says the source. "The country doesn't read the New York Times. It reads and hears what the Joplin, Missouri, paper and CBS and NBC say about the original story.

"The impression coming through in the country is that when it comes to Vietnam, the government always lied.

"People ask, if the war is such a fraud, how come my kid just got killed over there, or my nephew has to go next month?"

Sen. Edmund Muskie was one of the slowest to react to the disclosures, but by the weekend he was actively pressing for declassification of the 47-volume Pentagon study.

Last Tuesday, after the three lengthy Times reports had appeared, Muskie said he did not wish to comment at that time.

Later he told Marvin Kalb of CBS, "I am disappointed that these events should have been taking place when my party controlled the administration. But what is more serious are the implications for the integrity of our system . . . the confidence of our people that theirs is a government that responds to their voice, to their will and to their interest."

Muskie's supporters believe that his own support for the war through 1968 will be more understandable in light of the revelations, and that his reputation as a plain-talker will make him a more attractive candidate when the government's credibility is under attack.

Using LBJ Advisers

But his opponents remind reporters that, more than any potential candidate except Humphrey, Muskie is using Johnson administration advisers as part of his brain trust.

Included in this group are Cyrus Vance, who rose to be Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara's top assistant; Paul Warnke, former assistant secretary of defense and a key figure in the Pentagon study, and Clark Clifford, former secretary of defense and a hawk-turned-dove.

Muskie was asked by Kalb if he felt "a personal sense of betrayal . . . in these leaders following one course of action at the same time as they were telling the American people they were following another course."

Muskie responded, "... the result I deplore. The way in which the policymaking was handled I deplore. But I am not in a position at this point to judge the actions of particular people."